

Helpful Hints for River Protection Grant Reporting

For many groups, the DNR River Protection Grant is the first experience with receiving and managing a state grant. Knowing and following the reporting requirements is a very important part of accepting the grant. Not only will it make your final report easier to complete, submitting a proper grant report will be appreciated by DNR staff and will increase your group's professionalism.

Below are a few helpful hints that are based on the River Protection grant reporting requirements. The big take home message is to track and document ALL expenses as they occur. Do not wait until the end of the grant or organize all of your receipts, checks, and volunteer hours.

1. Read the Financial Administration document the DNR provides with your grant agreement. A copy is also available to you online at, <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/Grants/Forms/RiverFinAdmin.pdf>
2. Set up accounting procedures before project work begins. DO NOT wait until the project is over to start to track your expenses.
 - a. A "separate ledger" means you keep track of the expenses for this grant/project separate from the rest of the expense for your organization. This can be as simple as a Word table or Excel spreadsheet or a separate account in a program like Quick Books.
 - b. "Itemizing the expenses" means you list the expenses in as much detail as possible. The expenses are usually in categories such as staff/personnel, postage, printing, equipment, etc. These categories should be identical to the list in the budget you submitted to the DNR with your grant proposal.
 - c. You MUST show proof of the expenses by providing documentation. Documentation includes receipts, cancelled checks, credit card statements (showing the charge and that you paid the charge), and bank statements.
 - d. You also need to list these expenses on the reimbursement claim worksheet provided by the DNR.
 - i. The reimbursement claim worksheet is available at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/Grants/Forms/8700002.pdf>
 - e. An example of a process to set up is:
 - i. Determine what method you will use to create and maintain a separate ledger that itemizes all expenses for your grant.
 - ii. Make a copy the bill, invoice, or receipt for the expense. File copy in a folder created just for this project.
 - iii. Make a copy the check before you mail it to pay the bill.
 - iv. If your bank provides you cancelled checks, make a copy (both sides) when you receive it. Some banks provide cancelled checks online and you can then print both sides of the cancelled check.. File the cancelled check copy in a folder created just for this project.

- v. When you receive your monthly bank statement, make a copy and then highlight the checks that are associated with payments made for this grant.
 - vi. Keep the invoice, check, and bank statement copies for each expense together.
 - vii. List each expense on the reimbursement claim worksheet. You may want to complete this worksheet as expenses occur or monthly to avoid a lot of work at the end of the grant.
- f. Donated Labor
 - i. You MUST track volunteer labor or materials on the Donated Volunteer Labor log sheet, <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/Grants/Forms/Worksheet.pdf>
 - 1. This worksheet is for general volunteers that would not normally be paid to do this work as their profession.
 - ii. If you have professional services donated, accountant, lawyer, engineering consultant, then you need to use the Donated Professional Services worksheet, page 3 of the same link above.
 - iii. Again, track these hours as they occur.
- g. Payroll
 - i. If staff time is involved you need to track the amount of hours each person spends on this project for each pay period. Just like the rest of the expenses, it is best to track this throughout the grant period rather than waiting until the grant period is over.
- h. Grant Payment Request Form
 - i. Before the DNR will send you the final reimbursement payment, you need to complete and submit the reimbursement request form that was provided with your grant. It is online at: <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/Grants/Forms/8700001.pdf>
- i. Grant timeline
 - i. Remember: You cannot seek reimbursement for expenses that occurred before the start date or after the end date of your grant.
 - ii. Be sure to turn in your grant report on time.
- j. Variances, changes
 - i. The DNR does allow for reasonable changes to your grant timeline, budget, and project scope.
 - ii. However, you MUST get pre-approval before your grant end date from your regional Environmental Grant Specialist. See page one of the financial administration publication for more information.
- k. Questions
 - i. Questions about financial management of your grant should be directed to your Environmental Grant Specialist.
 - ii. The River Alliance of Wisconsin can also answer questions, 608.257.2424, ext. 113.